Colorado Springs

SAME-GENDER MARRIAGE

Gays deserve to be treated the same as everyone else

Earl Nichols stated that "The suffering of blacks in America is made a mockery by the idea that gay rights is a civil rights issue" ("Same-gender marriage isn't an issue of civil rights," Letters, March 26). This attitude of comparative suffering pits one marginalized group against another. Yes, blacks in America have been the subject of outrageous abuse throughout our history.

The oppressors are applauding to be sure. As we expend energy fighting one another we diminish the force and will needed for the long-term battle of erasing discrimination in our society.

The component of the argument that gays are not as discriminated against as blacks — therefore gay rights are not civil rights — often rides on the issue of choice. I can choose to act on my lesbianism, but a black person does not choose the color of their skin. By this logic, if I am discriminated against, it is my own fault for choosing not to "pass" as heterosexual, much like a light-skinned black in years past might have chosen not to "pass" for white. Clearly, this focuses the responsibility to change on the victim of bigotry rather than on the perpetrator.

Gay marriage is not about me and my partner of 11 years laying claim to the approximately 1,000 legal benefits that straight married couples have and we don't. It's about removing fear and our evolution as a nation. It's about liberty and the 14th Amendment. And it's about making sure that a 13-year-old girl in some small Midwest town doesn't commit suicide rather than face who she is.

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Shawna Kemppainen
Woodland Park

erely a strategy to circumvent the Tax-
ayer's Bill of Rights, which requires elec-
ons when public entities incur added
ebt.

Commission Chairman Chuck Brown
id putting the issue to a vote would be
waste of time because voters probably
ouldn't approve it. Money to pay the
bt could come from funds in the county
dget. Sheriff Terry Maketa said that's
better route than asking voters to raise
xes.

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pointed out, "We
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ellites to disable, or "neutral-
ize," as commanders like to
call it, but not destroy an ene-
my's orbiter.

Those programs, however,
are years away, making mili-
tary leaders apprehensive.

"It is now clear we can no
longer go into any kind of cri-